

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. An identifier indicating the status of each claim is provided.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A network of one or more interconnected computer systems forming an environment information server, the server comprising:

a server controller;

a network connection connected to said server controller;

an environment information database connected to said server controller configured to store data for one or more network environments; and

a request handler connected to said server controller configured to process user requests received through said network connection,

wherein the environment information server (1) periodically polls the one or more network environments (2) maintains the environment information database with a list of available network environments and network information for connecting to each network environment, and (3) updates the environment information database with changes in the available network environments,

wherein said request handler exchanges data with said environment information database and returns, in response to a received request, an environment report,

wherein the environment report comprises:

information characterizing the one or more network environments selectable by the user for connection, the information characterizing each network including user count information that indicates the current number of clients connected to the environment and the maximum number of clients allowed to be connected to the environment; and

client system dependent data derived by applying information from the environment information database to network information received from the client system, and

latency information for a particular network environment estimated relative to a sample user to estimate latency relative to the requesting user.

2. (Previously Presented) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
the data for an environment stored in said environment information database includes network information for the environment and status information for the environment.

3. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
said network information indicates a name of the environment.

4. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
said network information indicates a fully qualified domain name of the environment.

5. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
said network information indicates a port number of the environment.

6. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
said status information indicates whether the environment is available or not.

7. -- 8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
said environment information also includes description information indicating
information describing the environment.

10. (Original) The environment information server of claim 9, wherein:
said description information indicates news about the environment.

11. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
said environment report provides multi-lingual support.

12. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
said environment information request indicates client information about said client.

13. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:
each environment supports an on-line game.

14. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:

said requests are received from game consoles connected to said network connection through the Internet.

15. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:

said network connection is connected to the Internet.

16. (Original) The environment information server of claim 1, wherein:

said request handler generates environment reports using data stored in said environment information database.

17. (Original) The environment information server of claim 16, wherein:

said request handler customizes environment reports using client information in received requests.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of providing environment information, comprising:

periodically polling one or more network environments;

maintaining the environment information database with a list of available network environments and network information for connecting to each network environment;

updating an environment information database with information regarding each of the one or more network environments and with changes in the available network environments,

receiving a request from a user;

retrieving environment information for the one or more environments from the environment information database;

generating an environment report according to said retrieved environment information;

and

sending, in response to the user request, the environment report of network environments selectable by the user,

wherein the environment report comprises:

information characterizing the one or more network environments selectable by the user for connection, the information characterizing each network including user count information that indicates the current number of clients connected to the environment and the maximum number of clients allowed to be connected to the environment; and

client system dependent data derived by applying information from the environment information database to network information received from the client system, and

latency information for a particular network environment estimated relative to a sample user to estimate latency relative to the requesting user.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said network information indicates a name of the environment.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said network information indicates a fully qualified domain name of the environment.

21. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said network information indicates a port number of the environment.

22. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said status information indicates whether the environment is available or not.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18,

wherein environment information for an environment includes network information for the environment and status information for the environment.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said environment information also includes description information indicating information describing the environment.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein:

said description information indicates news about the environment.

27. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said environment report provides multi-lingual support.

28. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said environment information request indicates client information about said client.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein:

said environment report is customized according to said client information.

30. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said network connection is connected to the Internet.

31. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein:

said client is a game console.

32. (Currently Amended) A method of accessing environment information,
comprising:

sending an environment information request from a client to an environment information
server;

receiving from said environment information server, in response to the environment
information request, an environment report of network environments selectable by the client for
connection,

wherein the environment information server (1) periodically polls the one or more
network environments and (2) maintains the environment information database with a list of
available network environments and network information for connecting to each network

environment, and (3) updates the environment information database with changes in the available network environments,

exchanging data with said environment information database to return to the client, in response to a received request, the environment report,

wherein the environment report comprises:

information characterizing the one or more network environments selectable by the user for connection, the information characterizing each network including user count information that indicates the current number of clients connected to the environment and the maximum number of clients allowed to be connected to the environment; and

client system dependent data derived by applying information from the environment information database to network information received from the client system, and

latency information for a particular network environment estimated relative to a sample user to estimate latency relative to the requesting user.

33. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

connecting said client to a data network;

establishing said network connection between said client and said environment information through said data network;

closing said network connection to said environment information server after receiving said environment report.

34. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

presenting said environment report through said client.

35. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:
selecting an environment according to said environment report.

36. (Original) The method of claim 35, further comprising:
establishing a second network connection to said selected environment.

37. (Original) The method of claim 36, further comprising:
accessing an online game using said selected environment.

38. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:
said environment information request indicates client information about said client.

39. (Original) The method of claim 38, further comprising:
said environment report is customized according to said client information.

40. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:
said network information indicates a name of the environment.

41. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:
said network information indicates a fully qualified domain name of the environment.

42. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

said network information indicates a port number of the environment.

43. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

said status information indicates whether the environment is available or not.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32,

wherein environment information for an environment includes network information for the environment and status information for the environment.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

said environment information also includes description information indicating information describing the environment.

47. (Original) The method of claim 46, further comprising:

said description information indicates news about the environment.

48. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

said environment report provides multi-lingual support.

49. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

said network connection is to the Internet.

50. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

said client is a game console.

51. (Currently Amended) A non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon a computer program for use in providing environment information, the program comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

periodically poll one or more network environments;

maintain the environment information database with a list of available network environments and network information for connecting to each network environment;

update an environment information database with information regarding each of the one or more network environments and with changes in the available network environments,

process an environment information request from a client;

retrieve environment information for the one or more environments from the environment information database;

generate an environment report according to said retrieved environment information; and

send, in response to the client request, the environment report of network environments selectable by the client,

wherein the environment report comprises:

information characterizing the one or more network environments selectable by the user for connection, the information characterizing each network including user count information that indicates the current number of clients connected to the environment and the maximum number of clients allowed to be connected to the environment; ~~and~~

client system dependent data derived by applying information from the environment information database to network information received from the client system, ~~and~~

latency information for a particular network environment estimated relative to a sample user to estimate latency relative to the requesting user.

52. (Currently Amended) A non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon a computer program for use in accessing environment information, the program comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

send an environment information request from a client to an environment information server;

receive from said environment information server, in response to the environment information request, an environment report of network environments selectable by the client for connection,

wherein the environment information server (1) periodically polls the one or more network environments (2) maintains the environment information database with a list of available network environments and network information for connecting to each network environment, and (3) updates the environment information database with changes in the available network environments,

wherein the environment information server comprises a request handler that exchanges data with said environment information database and returns, in response to a received request, the environment report of network environments, and

wherein the environment report comprises:

information characterizing the one or more network environments selectable by the user for connection, the information characterizing each network including user count information that indicates the current number of clients connected to the environment and the maximum number of clients allowed to be connected to the environment; and

client system dependent data derived by applying information from the environment information database to network information received from the client system, and

latency information for a particular network environment estimated relative to a sample user to estimate latency relative to the requesting user.